

MacLenna (D.) R 1709
DECLARATION

OF THE

CATHOLIC SOCIETY

OF

D U B L I N ;

RESOLUTIONS AND OATH OF UNITED
IRISHMEN;

PHELAN'S LETTER,

AND

KENMARE'S ADDRESS.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED FOR R. WHITE, NO. 20, DAME-STREET.
M,DCC,XCI.

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OF THE

CATHOLIC SOCIETY

OF

DUBLIN

RESOLUTIONS



AND

PHILLIPS'S LETTER

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M.DCCC.XC.

DECLARATION, &c.

IN the present enlightened and improving period of Society, it is not for the **IRISH ROMAN CATHOLICS** alone to continue silent.—Not accused of any crime; not conscious of any delinquency, they suffer a privation of rights and conveniencies, the penalty reserved, in wise states, for offences of atrocious magnitude.—It does not become them, whilst with liberality ever to be gratefully remembered, many descriptions of their Fellow-citizens compassionate their situation, to seem indifferent to the desirable, and, they hope, not distant event of their emancipation.—They wish to ascertain upon what terms they may venture to settle in a Country, which they love with the rational preference of Men, not the simplicity of puerile acquiescence.—It is not for the **IRISH CATHOLICS**, armed as their cause is with reason and justice, like public foes to seek advantage from public calamity.—They ought to advance their claim at a time most favourable to discussion, when the condition of the Empire is flourishing and tranquil.—They might seem culpable to their Country, if, affecting to dissemble what it were unmanly not to feel,

feel, they reserved their pretensions in ambuscade to augment the perplexities of some critical emergency.—They should be culpable to posterity, if they omitted to profit of the general inclination of public sentiment.—They should be culpable to themselves, if they suffered an imputation to subsist, that in the extent of the British territory they alone submit, without repining, to a mortifying and oppressive bondage; degrading to themselves, and pernicious to their country.—They conceive that in the present state of things, their silence might be received as evidence of such dispositions.

Influenced by these considerations, and instructed by a recent transaction, that although laws may be shameful and preposterous, there is no security that they shall not be enforced,—for even in a philosophic age there will be bigots and tyrants, where the votaries of freedom are most sanguine. A number of ROMAN CATHOLICS, resident in Dublin, have formed themselves into a Society, which they invite their Fellow-sufferers throughout the Nation to unite with, which shall have for its object to consider, and, individually, to support, with all their zeal, and personal influence, such measures, not inconsistent with their duty to the Civil Magistrate, as shall appear likely to relieve them from the oppressions and disqualifications, imposed in this Country on persons professing the ROMAN CATHOLIC Religion.—We therefore, do unanimously resolve,

That

That we will, to the utmost of our power, endeavour by all legal and constitutional means to procure the repeal of the laws by which we are aggrieved, as ROMAN CATHOLICS.—That we will promote repeated applications to every branch of the legislature for that purpose; and assist such applications by all means of legal influence, which it shall at any time be possible for us to exert.

It would be tedious, it might prove disgusting, to recount each individual grievance under which we suffer.—The ROMAN CATHOLICS seem preserved in this Land but as a source of Revenue.—The whole legislative, the whole executive, the whole judicial power of the State, is in the hands of men, over whom they have no controul, and with whom they can have little intercourse.—They are prohibited to engage in any mode of industry, from which it is possible to debar them, or which is worth the monopoly.—They are restricted in the education of their children,—as conscientious men we cannot lightly abandon our Religion,—as prudent men we hesitate to engage in controversial study; the wisest have been bewildered in such pursuits, and they are for the most part incompatible with our necessary occupations.—Nor is there any moral advantage held out as an inducement to change our Creed.—It is not pretended that we should become better men, or more dutiful subjects, but merely, experimentalists in Religion, seek to gratify their caprice by forcing us
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from our habits of education, into the perplexing labyrinths of theology.

The liberty of IRELAND to those of our communion is a calamity, and their misfortunes seem likely to increase, as the country shall improve in prosperity and freedom.—They may look with envy to the subjects of an arbitrary Monarch, and contrast that government, in which one great tyrant ravages the land, with the thousand inferior despots, whom at every instant they must encounter.—They have the bustle and cumbersome forms, without the advantages, of Liberty.—The octennial period, at which the delegated trust of legislation is revoked, and his importance restored to the constituent, returns but to disturb their tranquillity, and revive the recollection of their debasement.—All the activity, all the popular arts of electioneering canvas, enforce the ideas of their insignificance; they exemplify it too; witness the various preferences given by persons of rank to, not always the most deserving among our Protestant Countrymen;—a preference nearly as detrimental to the independent Protestants, as to us.

There exists not on their behalf any controul over power.—They have felt the truth of this assertion, when in this age of toleration, even within the last eight years, several new penal statutes have been enacted against them.—They experience it daily, not alone in the great deliberations of the nation,
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but in the little concerns of minute districts.— Not alone in the levy of public money for the service of the state, but in the local imposition of county and parochial taxes. — We appeal to our rulers, we appeal to Ireland, we appeal to Europe, if we deserve a place in Society, should we seem willing to insinuate that such a situation is not severely unacceptable.

We are satisfied that the mere repeal of the laws against us will prove but feebly beneficial, unless the act be sanctioned by the concurrence of our Protestant brethren, and those jealousies removed by which the social intercourse of private life is interrupted.—It is time we should cease to be distinct nations, forcibly enclosed within the limits of one island.— It shall be a capital object of our institution to encourage the spirit of harmony, and sentiments of affection, which the ties of common interest, and common country, ought, ere now, to have inspired.—Countrymen! too long have we suffered ourselves to be opposed in rival factions to each other, the sport of those who felt no tenderness for either. Why should a diversity of sentiment, so usual, where the matter in debate is abstruse or important, separate those whom Heaven placed together for mutual benefit and consolation? Objects material in their day produced hostility between our ancestors.—The causes of that discord have ceased to exist; let the enmity too perish.— Let it be the duty of the present and of future
ages,

ages, to prevent the recurrence of such unnatural and calamitous dissension, — except in the actual discharge of the religious duties, which conscience renders inevitable, we wish there never shall be found a trace of difference, which may possibly divide us into distinct communities.

The ill effects of these restrictions are not confined to those of our Religion ; — they extend to every individual, and every public body in the nation ; — under the weight of them, industry is depressed ; under their influence, public spirit is enervated. — IT IS THE INTEREST OF EVERY MAN IN IRELAND, THAT THE ENTIRE CODE SHOULD BE ABOLISHED. — It is the interest of the Crown, as it must promote the general happiness of the subjects. — It is the interest of the great, as it will serve to tranquillize the Country, and to encourage industry ; — It is the additional interest of the middle and inferior ranks, as it must impart new importance to their sentiments, and to the expression of their sentiments, we call upon every order in the state, not alone by their benevolence and justice, but by their patriotism and self-interest, to co-operate with our exertions.

It adds the insult of mockery to the misfortune of the *Irish Catholics*, that the number of persons aggrieved, in every other instance an inducement to redress, is a reason alledged to procrastinate their relief,

relief, and an argument used to impose silence on their murmurs. — Is it their act, that a multitude of Irishmen are aggregated by common grievance, and classed in one great community of fellow-sufferers? Why accuse them of hostility to the constitution? They earnestly solicit to participate in its advantages. — Why suspect them of enmity to their Country? — They desire entirely to incorporate themselves with it to contract closer ties, which shall decide them to consign their posterity irrevocably to its bosom. — We envy not its endowments to the established Church; adversity has instructed us, that all the consolations, which our religion promises, are most faithfully and tenderly administered by Pastors, with moderate appointments, a free gift of gratitude to the kindest benefactors, — fastidiously excluded from the constitution, we can pronounce on it, but as aliens, by speculation. — We discern in it the means of much happiness; we regret that its symmetry is not complete, a chasm remains which might be filled with advantage by the ROMAN CATHOLICS; — we have neither passion, nor interest at variance with the order of things it professes to establish. — We desire only that property in our hands, may have its natural weight, and merit in our children its rational encouragement. We have sworn Allegiance to our Sovereign, and the very evils we complain of, prove how inviolable is our attachment to such obligations. — We respect the peerage, the ornament of the state and bulwark of the people; interposing,

terposing, as we hope the *Irish Catholics* will experience, mediatory good offices between authority, and the objects of it.—We solicit a share of interest in the existence of the commons,—do you require an additional test? We offer one more unequivocal than a volume of abjurations, — *we hope to be free, and will endeavour to be united.*—Do you require new proofs of our sincerity? We stood by you in the exigencies of our country.—We extend our hands the pledge of cordiality.—*Who is he that calls himself a friend to IRELAND, and will refuse us?*

We feel ourselves justified in this association: The period draws near when it will besit the **IRISH CATHOLICS** to approach the legislature with respectful solicitation; it is meet that those who suffer should confer, in order to ascertain the means and matter of redress likely to prove at once satisfactory and successful.—It is insinuated that some of our Protestant Brethren are adverse to our emancipation; it is meet we should investigate the grounds of this strange assertion: The laws that have separated us from our Countrymen, destroying our intercourse with bodies constituted by authority, leave us no other manner to collect, or to convey the general sense of our grievances, than this of a self-created Society. We mean not to interfere with the harmony now happily subsisting through the nation: if the applications on our behalf are complied with, we can never have an occasion,

occasion,—if rejected, we cannot have an interest to interrupt it.—Engaged for the most part in the various departments of commerce, we are concerned not less than any other class of citizens, to cultivate the blessings of tranquillity ; individually we have more at stake than some, who presume to falsify our motives, and calumniate our actions.—The ROMAN CATHOLIC body measured strength with the power of the State and was vanquished, when it possessed a force, that never more can be exerted, and was opposed to enemies far less numerous, than now it should encounter.—The confiscations of that period are confirmed to the present occupiers by immemorial possession, by the utter impossibility of ascertaining the original proprietors, by the personal and pecuniary interest, of almost every ROMAN CATHOLIC in the land, to maintain the settlement.—Many of our communion already have, and still more are likely to expend their property on titles derived under these forfeitures. It is not from the wealthy, attached to their present enjoyment, that commotion is to be apprehended.—It is not from the industrious, a single year of anarchy must prove fatal to their competence.—It is not from the poor, a wretched band of slaves, mouldering under these bad laws, and only made use of to degrade the *Irish Catholics* to a rabble, when it is convenient to despise them. We are willing to forget, that any besides the present race, ever existed in this island.—We long have been willing to forget it ; if our recollection

were

were not kept alive by what we suffer, and by the celebration of festivals memorable only, as they denote the æra, and the events, from whence we date our bondage.

We will endeavour by temperate, but unremitting assiduity, to procure the benefit of that constitution which, of all our fellow-subjects, is denied alone to those of our persuasion.—We are amenable to all the decrees of the State, we contribute to all its exigencies; we are still to be informed upon what grounds its advantages are made a monopoly to our exclusion.—We challenge an investigation of our principles and conduct,—we feel not in ourselves, we know not that there is in our brethren, a deficiency of manly spirit, of capacity or virtue, which ought to assign to the *Irish* ROMAN CATHOLIC an inferior rank among the creatures of our common father.—If we have a crime it is to have slept over our chains,—our cause is the cause of justice, and our country. — We solicit counsel and assistance from all to whom these sacred names do not present themselves unheeded.

To the patronage of the lettered we peculiarly recommend ourselves, —where talents have arisen among us, they have been compelled to seek refuge in a foreign country, or they have perished in their infancy, robbed of the hope that animates, curtailed of the education that invigorates them.
—We

—We claim as of right the benefit of open trial and candid discussion ; when overpowered by the administration of an extensive Empire, the *British* Senate did not refuse its attention to the unfortunate exiles of *Africa*.—If in this enlightened age it is still our doom to suffer, we submit ;—but at least let us learn what imputation of crimes can instigate, or what motives of expediency can account for the denunciation of that heavy judgment.—That, if loyalty, which strong temptations could never alienate ; if exemplary good conduct, under the most trying circumstances ; if reverence to a constitution, which in our native land we are forbidden to approach, be insufficient to remove unjust aspersions, and entitle us to the kindness and confidence of our brethren ; we may be at least instructed how we should atone for what we cannot deem inexpiable.—*The political errors or misfortunes of our ancestors.*

By Order of the Society,

THEOBALD M'KENNA, Secretary.

After a considerable research, the Publisher has been favoured with the following copy of the Oath tendered to, and taken by every person admitted into The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin.

I *A. B.* in the presence of God, do pledge myself to my country, that I will use all my abilities and influence in the attainment of an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish Nation in Parliament——And as a means of absolute and immediate necessity in the establishment of this Chief Good of Ireland, I will endeavour, as much as lies in my ability, to forward a brotherhood of affection, an identity of interests, a communion of rights, and an union of power among Irishmen of all religious persuasions; without which every reform in parliament must be partial, not national, inadequate to the wants, delusive to the wishes, and insufficient for the freedom and happiness of this country.

UNITED IRISHMEN OF DUBLIN.

At a meeting of the Society of united Irishmen of Dublin, the Hon. Simon Butler in the chair, the following was agreed to :

WHEN we reflect how often the Freemen and Freeholders of Dublin have been convened, humbly to express their grievances to Parliament—how often they have solicited the enactment of good, and the repeal of bad laws—how often, for successive years, they have petitioned against the obnoxious and unconstitutional police act—and how often all these applications have been treated with the most perfect contumacy and contempt—when these facts are brought to recollection, is there an honest man will say, That the House of Commons have the smallest respect for the people, or believe themselves their legitimate representatives?—The fact is, that the great majority of that House consider themselves as the representatives of their own money, or the hired servants of the English government; whose Minister here is appointed for the sole purpose of dealing out corruption to them—at the expence of Irish liberty, Irish commerce, and Irish improvement.—This being the case, it naturally follows, that such Minister is not only the representative of
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the English views against this country, but is also *the sole representative of the people of Ireland*. To elucidate which assertion, it is only necessary to ask, whether a single question in favour of this oppressed nation can be carried without his consent?—and whether any measure, however inimical, may not through his influence be effected?

In this state of abject slavery, no hope remains for us, but in the sincere and hearty *union of all the people*, for a complete and radical reform of Parliament; because it is obvious, that *one party alone* have been ever unable to obtain a single blessing for their country; and the policy of our rulers have been always such, as to keep the different sects at variance, in which they have been but-too well seconded by our own folly.

For the attainment then of this great and important object—for the removal of absurd and ruinous distinctions—and for promoting a complete coalition of the people—a Club has been formed, composed of all religious persuasions, who have adopted for their name—The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin,—and have taken as their Declaration that of a similar Society in Belfast.

JAMES NAPPER TANDY, *Secretary*.

VOLUNTEERS OF BELFAST.

To the Roman Catholics of Jamestown and Elphin,

GENTLEMEN,

IT gives us the highest satisfaction to find that the sentiments contained in our Declaration should so heartily meet your approbation; and we shall be exceedingly happy to cultivate a correspondence with you on every occasion where our joint efforts may tend to restore to IRISHMEN—their long lost rights.

You are, or ought to be, engaged in our cause. We have spoken:—We have said that the constitution of this country, if it desires, or deserves to be free, must comprehend THE PEOPLE. We have said that the first law is the general will, and the determination of that will must be—that every citizen, without distinction of birth, possessions or talents, should enjoy the natural rights of personal security, personal freedom, and private property; the right of serving God according to his conscience, and the power of defending these rights;—We have said that no man can be free

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whose

whose life, property and opinions are at the discretion of others, to whose appointment he has no choice, and over whose conduct he has no controul:—We have said therefore that our great object was to effectuate an adequate representation of the people in Parliament—to destroy the despotism of discretionary delegation, and to conduct the community by the impulse of ITS OWN will: Of this will, you form a great part.—If to be a free nation has only to WILL it, let us will it—let all our enmities rest with the bones of our ancestors: Differing in our religion, as we differ in our faces, but resembling each other in the great features of humanity; let us unite to vindicate the rights of our common nature; let the decisive and unanimous voice of the Society at large, of the body of the People, the mighty and irresistible WHOLE—be heard, it will—it must be obeyed.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR, CHAIRMAN.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Some time since forwarded by the Catholic Society of Dublin, to the various cities, towns, and districts throughout this kingdom.

HAVING received authentic intelligence, from different parts of Ireland, that several ill-informed Catholics, urged forward by designing men, are endeavouring to excite an opposition of sentiment against the declaration of the Catholic Society of Dublin—We think it our duty (knowing your zeal for our common interests,) to give you this early intimation, that you may exert all your influence to frustrate an attempt so *insidious* and *corrupt*.

As the best defence of that declaration, we transmit you a copy — you will find it, simply, a clear and strong statement of the grievances which we have long suffered—it calls for an investigation of these grievances—and surely public discussion cannot injure that cause which has for its advocate *truth, justice and sound policy?* — So far from injuring, we know that this declaration has roused the
reigning

reigning power to an enquiry into those laws by which we are oppressed; which enquiry we think would not have taken place at the present day, but for the exertions of the catholic society.

All we require of our brethren is, that they stand on the strong ground of *perfect silence*, neither intemperately advancing, nor inconsistently receding — Avoiding, for the present, all kinds of declarations or addresses — but relying, with confidence, on the exertions of their delegates in Dublin, who being placed at the source of information, are the more competent to forward the interest of the catholic body at this *very critical period*. — We again exhort you to an inflexible silence, as any species of declaration or address, at this time, (however innocent or plausible in appearance) might be attended with the most fatal *consequences to the catholic cause*.

Signed by Order,

JAMES PHELAN.

The following ADDRESS has been presented to
the LORD LIEUTENANT.

To his Excellency JOHN Earl of WESTMORLAND,
Lord Lieutenant General and General Gover-
nor of IRELAND.

WE the ROMAN CATHOLIC inhabitants
of the county of KERRY, finding that certain
writings are published in this kingdom, and affoci-
ations attempted to be formed, which might possi-
bly sow the seeds of discontent and impatience
amongst the lower classes of our persuasion, hum-
bly beg leave, under these circumstances, to pre-
sent your Excellency the most unfeigned assu-
rances of our unshaken loyalty, perfect submission
to the laws, and most grateful and dutiful attach-
ment to his Majesty's person and government;
we also humbly entreat your Excellency to accept
our humble Declaration, that we hold in abhor-
rence every act, that can in the remotest degree,
favour of faction, or excite commotion in the
State; that we are firmly determined always to
persevere in that peaceable conduct, which has
merited, for our Body, a relaxation of the Penal
Statutes, made in angry times against them; and,
on

on this conduct alone, we rely for further favours from an enlightened Legislature, and a mild and auspicious Government, such as we have the happiness of living under.

KENMARE, for himself and the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the co. Kerry.

GERARD TEAHAN, for myself and the Roman Catholic Clergy of Kerry.

15 JY 64

